



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Legislative Counsel
Washington, D. C. 20505

Telephone: [redacted]

12 April 1976

TO: Mr. T. Edward Braswell, Chief Counsel
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

Ed:

Per our conversations the last few days re congressional oversight of the intelligence community, attached is a copy of a letter we propose to recommend the Director send to Senator Cannon. Any problems from your standpoint?



George L. Cary
Legislative Counsel

FORM 1533 OBSOLETE
6-68 PREVIOUS EDITIONS

(40)

Approved For Release 2004/10/27 : CIA-RDP78M02660R000200050046-2
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

Honorable Howard Cannon, Chairman
Committee on Rules and Administration
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

It is my understanding that consideration is being given in the Rules Committee to amend S. Res. 400 to leave budgetary authorization and legislative jurisdiction of intelligence agencies with present Senate standing committees, while creating a new standing committee to exercise a general oversight of these agencies. While the manner in which the Senate chooses to exercise oversight of intelligence agencies is for the Senate to determine, I feel compelled to register my objection to any plan, such as the one outlined above, which would broaden access to sensitive operational information.

During my 31 March testimony before the Committee, I stressed that the intelligence community, particularly CIA, has been confronted with a disturbing proliferation of congressional oversight responsibility. The Armed Services and Appropriations Committees have traditionally exercised oversight of CIA. During the 94th Congress, the Senate Foreign Relations and House International Relations Committees (pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act) and the two select committees have been briefed on sensitive CIA operations. The Senate Budget Committee has recently established an intelligence unit and begun requesting access to sensitive information. In addition, 11 other congressional committees and subcommittees have requested access to sensitive Agency operational information during the past year. With this background, you will understand my reluctance to have still another committee added to the rolls of those with some oversight responsibility.



It is also my view that the nation's foreign intelligence effort would be best served by congressional oversight in which one Senate committee has jurisdiction of all major components on the intelligence community. Unified jurisdiction would give one committee an overall, rather than parochial, view of the intelligence community. Thus, I believe oversight of CIA and the intelligence components of the Department of Defense should not be split between two committees.

Mr. Chairman, it is not my wish or intent to limit Congress' access to substantive intelligence on foreign developments. I want Congress to be a consumer of intelligence; However, I believe the trend toward wide proliferation of information on Agency operations must be reversed, rather than fueled, if Congress and the Executive Branch are to work together constructively in the intelligence field, and if sensitive operational information is to be reasonably protected from unauthorized disclosure.

Sincerely,

George Bush
Director